



CYCLING ON LONDON'S WATERWAYS



EXTRACTS FROM COMPLAINTS

- *"I am amazed that on such a lovely, picturesque and pleasant journey, you come across so many impolite, aggressive, miserable bastards - which has to be said, are mostly men kitted out head to toe in flash cycling gear like a premenstrual Lance Armstrong."*
- ***"I recently took my mother for a walk along the canal, but we had to give up and walk along the main road since she was terrified that a cyclist would hit her and was a nervous wreck by the end of it!"***
- *"My friend, her small baby and myself were screamed at by a couple trying to pass on their bicycles. The man began shouting 'out of my way' as he shot past, and when his lady companion nearly caught the edge of my friend's pushchair, he told us to 'get the f*** out of the way'"*
- ***"A cyclist speeding under a bridge almost hit someone in a wheelchair stopping with a screech of brakes inches from the chair."***
- *"A cyclist came in the opposite direction traveling extremely fast. He smashed into me and I was knocked over. I landed on my left side of my head, was stunned by the impact; one tooth was badly damaged and my cycle is in for repair." (Letter from a cyclist)*



**British
Waterways
London**



PARENTS at the section of the Regent's Canal towpath that they say has been turned into a nightmare by cyclists.
Picture: Tony Gay

Battle over canal path

PARENTS and teachers are taking on the cyclists who are turning the daily school run along the canal towpath into a nightmare.

Hanover Primary School, in Noel Road, Islington, is based on the edge of the Regent's Canal, and parents use the towpath to walk their children to and from the school.

But they say the journey is becoming more dangerous because of cyclists who refuse to slow down.

Parent William Owen said: "A lot of parents don't use the path. Someone almost rode into me the other day and that happens on an almost daily basis. It's been getting worse over the last two years."

Hanover Primary School headteacher Paul Jarman is demanding British Waterways do something to make the paths safer.

He said: "People speed across the path in front of our school when there are notices that say cyclists shouldn't go more than walking pace and that pedestrians take precedent."

"When we take the children to sports day, the cyclists refuse to slow down and it's dangerous."

He added: "I don't think the signs are

clear enough. Cyclists do not have precedence over pedestrians."

A British Waterways spokesman said: "We carried out a safety audit in the summer to assess what the problem is."

"We have found that on one hand we have inconsiderate cyclists who think it is their right to cycle at any speed,

while on the other we have those who say there shouldn't be any cyclists."

"We want people to co-exist together. But on this stretch there seems to be a lot of pedestrians and cyclists competing for a narrow strip of concrete. Pedestrians have priority but ultimately it's a privilege to use the towpaths."

BACKGROUND

- Series of towpath studies
- Towpath upgrades
- Increase in cyclists due to:
 - London Congestion Charge
 - Impact of the tube bombings
 - Improvements to towpath quality
 - Increased promotion of cycling by Transport for London
 - Increase in people adopting a healthy lifestyle
- 237 cyclists and 220 pedestrians in one hour
- Increase in complaints





TRANSPORT FOR LONDON

- *'Work with the London boroughs and The Royal Parks to open up cycle corridors to and through key green spaces and along London's waterways'.*
- Improvements on the Grand Union mainline & Paddington Arm.
- 2006/07 bid for £770,000 to TfL for Regent's Canal.
- Allocated £145,000.





REGENT'S CANAL TOWPATH PROJECT

- Independent safety audit
- 60 hours of observation
- Recorded 300 events
- 90% of events were slight
- Around 30 incidents were serious or collisions
- Only one instance of a user falling into the canal!



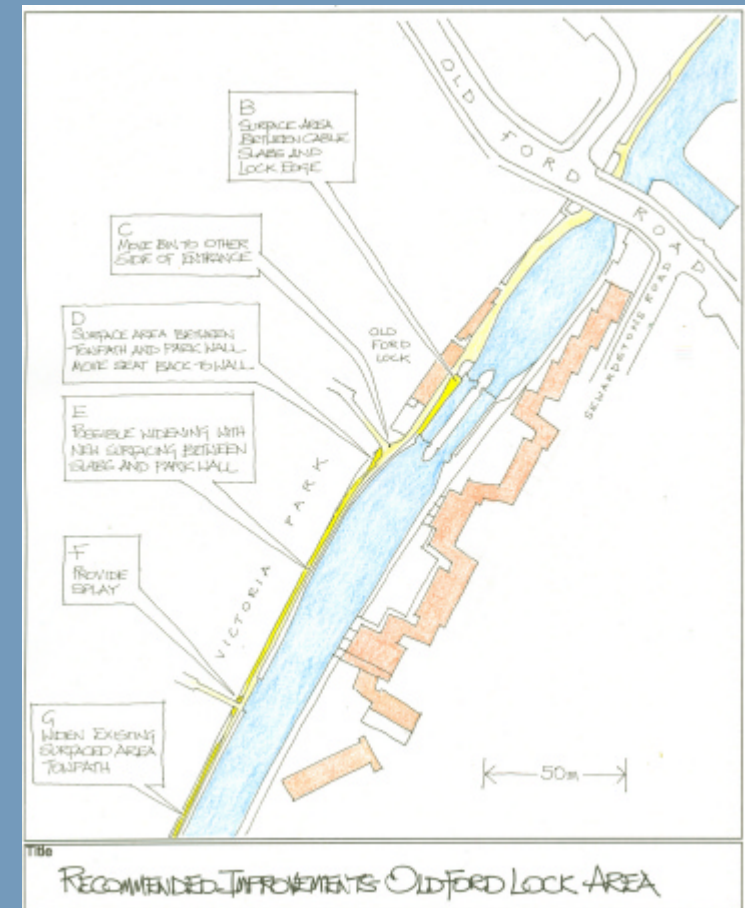


STAKEHOLDERS

- London Cycling Campaign*
- Hackney Cyclists*
- Ramblers Association*
- Islington Living Streets*
- Groundwork Camden & Islington*
- London Borough of Islington*
- London Borough of Hackney
- London Borough of Camden
- London Borough of Tower Hamlets
- Transport for London*
- Hanover School*
- Angel Association*
- Sustrans*
- Islington Greenspace*
- London Boroughs Cycling Officers Group
- Inland Waterways Association
- Islington Cycling Action Group
- Islington Boat Club
- Thames 21
- Canalways

TRANSPORT INITIATIVES RECOMMENDATIONS

- Towpath widening and refurbishment
- Relocating benches and bins
- Installing mirrors on bridges
- New signage
- New Code of Conduct
- Bridge Silvering
- Employment of Rangers



OUR PLANS

- Towpath widening and refurbishment
- Minimal number of chicanes at specific locations
- Improved directional and shared use path signage
- Mirrors on bridges with poor sightlines
- Tactile strips at bridges
- New code of conduct for pedestrians
- New code of conduct for cyclists
- Awareness Campaign



TfL's suggested shared use path signage

FUTURE PLANS

- Towpath Management Plan to include:
 - Minimum standards
 - Maintenance
 - Bye-laws
 - Monitoring and user surveys & audits
 - Prioritisation of infrastructure improvements
 - Transport Integration
- Need TfL's commitment and financial support to write plan.



FUTURE PLANS

- Need TfL's support to employ a full-time Towpath Access Officer to action the Towpath Management Plan.
- Require capital expenditure commitment from TfL for the next 3 years for ongoing improvements rather than year on year application

